



Westfield

Local Heroes

2021

Westfield Local Heroes is a community recognition and awards program, designed to shine the spotlight on those people across Australia and New Zealand who make a positive impact to their local community and environment.

Individuals are nominated by their local communities, with the outcome of a public vote determining the three successful 2021 nominees for every Westfield centre.

Westfield Local Heroes

Now in its fourth year, we have awarded \$4.88 million to 489 community organisations.

Every year, we recognise more than 120 Westfield Local Heroes and provide more than \$1.2M in community grants to their affiliated organisations.

We congratulate all the 2021 nominees for being recognised by their communities and thank them for the important contribution they all make.



Westfield

Hurstville

NSW

Horticulturist Lucillia Chan is dedicating her retirement to helping people from all walks of life experience the joy and healing power of nature.

Lucillia is an enthusiastic volunteer for the Hurstville Community Garden Association, which has set up a 30-bed garden in Hurstville.

The association grows vegetables and flowering plants and has a communal area where people can simply enjoy the beauty. It is all the more inclusive because Lucillia is fluent in English and Cantonese.

Several local groups use the garden, including the gardening therapy group that Lucillia started to help people affected by cancer. The relaxing atmosphere, keeping busy with weeding and watering and interacting with other people help relieve members' stress and anxiety.

The garden also allows young mums to grow food, is used to teach high school students about sustainability and gives seniors

a place to connect with the community.

Despite her busy volunteering schedule, Lucillia generously gives her time to teach worm farming and composting to people in the neighbourhood.

Lucillia is honoured to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "The garden provides a green space for people living in high-rise buildings. We practise organic gardening, which is important for the environment and the health and wellbeing of the community," she says.

Lucillia's Nominator says: "Lucy is a Westfield Local Hero because she helps people with cancer through her garden therapy classes, which have a relaxing effect. She uses her own funds and resources to run programs in the garden."



Giving a gift of nature

Lucillia Chan

Hurstville Community Garden Association

Passionate, Knowledgeable, Generous

"The garden provides a green space for people living in high-rise buildings. We practise organic gardening, which is important for the environment and the health and wellbeing of the community."



Rehoming digital devices

Annette Mayne

The Reconnect Project

Selfless, Giving, Hard-working

"Every week I receive more and more emails from caseworkers who are desperate to source devices for their clients. Clearly, there is a need for what I am doing, which is a big motivator."

Annette Mayne has provided over 300 mobile devices to vulnerable people while keeping useable phones, tablets and laptops out of landfill.

Annette founded The Reconnect Project to tackle the surge in e-waste among financially advantaged consumers and the disparity between the haves and have-nots when it comes to accessing technology.

Her social enterprise refurbishes pre-loved devices – after erasing sensitive data – before passing them on to caseworkers from local services who distribute them to people who can't afford to buy their own device.

The initiative has helped women fleeing domestic violence who need a clean phone that an aggressor can't track.

In response to COVID-19, the project donated laptops to refugee families to use for homeschooling and to people with mental illness to access online counselling.

The devices are also a life changer for formerly homeless youth who are re-engaging with education.

Annette is honoured to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "There is no other organisation providing this service in Australia. Every week I receive more and more emails from caseworkers who are desperate to source devices for their clients. Clearly, there is a need for what I am doing, which is a big motivator," she says.

Annette's nominator says: "Annette is a Westfield Local Hero because she selflessly helps women in desperate situations as well as diverting e-waste from landfill."

Altruistic Sonya Sarkis has raised funds in her community and put her savings towards setting up a comfortable and stylish temporary home for local women fleeing domestic violence.

Sonya has spent 20 years doing pro bono work and established her volunteer-run Sweet Dreams Foundation last May to give women somewhere safe to live until they can transition to longer-term accommodation.

The charity is also setting up support groups for the women and programs to help them become self-sufficient in the future.

"I am blessed to be in a position to be able to provide some of this needed support to others," Sonya says.

"This charity was set up in honour of my late mother and those women who did not have the resources or support to escape domestic violence."

One of Sonya's rewarding experiences was rescuing a woman who had been left at the side of the road by her violent partner. "Today, she is happy, has attained a Master's in Education and is teaching at a private school," says Sonya.

Sonya is honoured to be nominated as a Westfield Local Hero. "This nomination has further motivated me to continue this work and leave a positive legacy for the next generation," she says.

Sonya's nominator says: "Sonya is a Westfield Local Hero because she works tirelessly to connect with her local network of business connections, neighbours and school parents to raise funds for this worthy and most necessary charity."



Giving women hope

Sonya Sarkis

Sweet Dreams Foundation Limited

Brave, Loyal, Passionate

"This charity was set up in honour of my late mother and those women who did not have the resources or support to escape domestic violence."

Your 2021 Finalists



Ibtisam Hammoud

3Bridges Community

Passionate and dedicated employee Ibtisam Hammoud brings hope and connection to people of all ages through her work with 3Bridges Community. Ibtisam plays a big part in encouraging young people to believe in themselves, make informed decisions and follow their dreams. In addition, she helps older people in the community to access services and supports other 3Bridges activities.



Samey Minkara

Street Industries

CEO and Founder of Street Industries, Samey Minkara is an experienced youth worker. Samey started his mentoring program, Street Industries, last July to support young people impacted by Covid-19. He leads a team of volunteers that work on the streets to reach young people, assisting them to reconnect with their communities.



Mark Pacey

The Kids' Cancer Project

Dedicated dad Mark Pacey has pushed himself to his physical limits to raise over \$150,000 for The Kids' Cancer Project. To reflect the endurance of children with cancer, Mark came up with a 24-hour triathlon to raise funds for the project, which funds research into childhood cancers. He calls his event the Bloody Long Day.

Recognising all of our 2021 nominees

Yu Huai He

**The Federation of Australian
Chinese Cultural Associations**

Mr David Low

**Myhealth Hurstville Medical
Centre**

Dimitrios Papalexis

Soulgen

Disability Dating Australia (Sean)

DisabilityDatingAustralia

Allan Zreik

Zed n Zed Jewellers

Vaughn Vaio Arambatzis

Sydney Dogs and Cats Home

Amy Chang

**AUSCAP Australian Civil Air
Patrol**

Cisco Chung

**Bankstown Canterbury
Community Transport**

Marnie Joseph

JD Sports

Xiaolong (David) Yang

Diversity and Disability Alliance

Suzanne Medway AM

Australian Wildlife Society

Terry Lynch

Autism Community Network

Lina Pintor Cabaero

Asian Women at Work Inc

Ibtisam Hammoud

3Bridges Community

Sofia Carvajal

**Huntsville Community Garden
Association**

Charlotte Mullens

Hurstville Community Garden

Sonya Sarkis

**Sweet Dreams Foundation
Limited**

Annette Mayne

The ReConnect Project

Samey Minkara

Street Industries

Mark Pacey

The Kids' Cancer Project

Lucillia Chan

**Hurstville Community Garden
Association**

**If you or anyone you know would like more information
on what support is available:**

AUSTRALIA

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

MensLine: 1300 78 99 78

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732

NEW ZEALAND

Lifeline: 0800 543 354

Suicide Crisis Helpline: 0508 828 865

Kidsline: 0800 54 37 54

Depression Helpline: 0800 111 757

Samaritans: 0800 726 666

Family Violence Information Line: 0800 456 450

The background features a large, abstract graphic composed of overlapping, rounded shapes in various shades of red and white. The shapes create a sense of depth and movement, with some areas appearing to be layered on top of others. The overall composition is clean and modern.

westfield.com.au/local-heroes

westfield.co.nz/local-heroes

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SCENTRE GROUP